

REMARKS

The present filing is responsive to the Examiner's concerns noted in the Office Action.

Summary of the Response

The specification has been further amended. Claims 1, 6, 7, 12-15 and 21-24 have been amended. Claim 20 has been canceled. Claims 3, 5, 8, 11 have been previously canceled. Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12-19 and 21-24 remain pending in this application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the present application as amended are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-2, 4, 6-7, 9-10, 12-19, 21-24.

Claims 21 to 23 have been rewritten into independent form.

Specification Objection

The specification has been amended to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-2, 4, 6-7, 9-10 and 12-24 are objected to because of informalities.

Claims 1, 12, 13 and 24 have been amended to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 112

Claims 1-2, 4, 6-7, 9-10 and 12-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The affected claims have been amended to correct the informalities noted by the Examiner.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC 102

Claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sudo (US 5,831,844) and Tobita (US 5,815,446). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

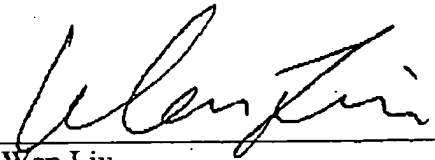
While Applicant does not agree with the rejection, in the interest of forwarding this case to early allowance, claim 20 has been canceled without prejudice.

CONCLUSION

In view of all the foregoing, Applicant submits that the claims pending in this application are patentable over the references of record and are in condition for allowance. Such action at an early date is earnestly solicited. **The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned representative to discuss any outstanding issues that may not have been adequately addressed in this response.**

The Assistant Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this transmittal and associated documents, or to credit any overpayment to **Deposit Account No. 501288** referencing the attorney docket number of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



Wen Liu
Registration No. 32,822

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LIU & LIU
444 S. Flower Street, Suite 1750
Los Angeles, California 90071
Telephone: (213) 830-5743
Facsimile: (213) 830-5741
Email: wliu@liulaw.com